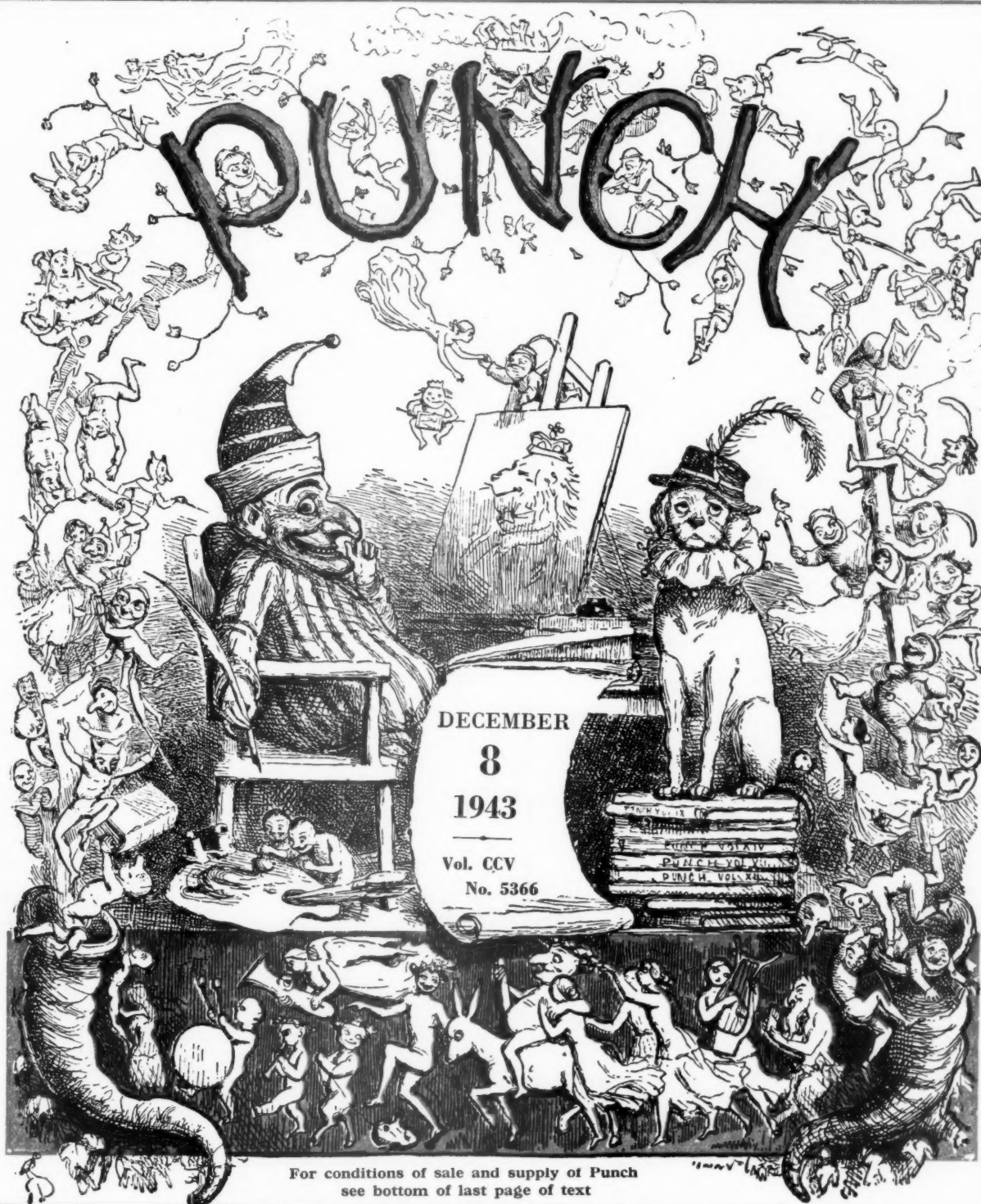


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JAN 8 1944



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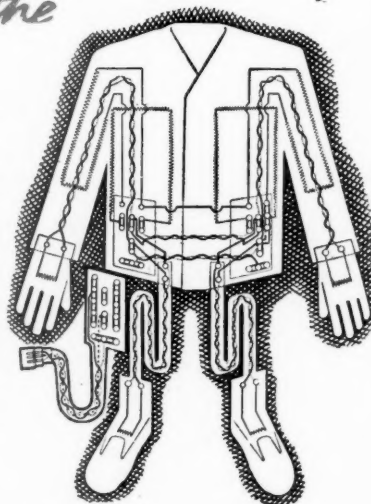
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Pan Yan

Of course, Pan Yan is not so easy to get nowadays. But the Colonel can put up with a lot for the sake of Victory.

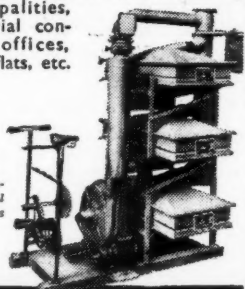
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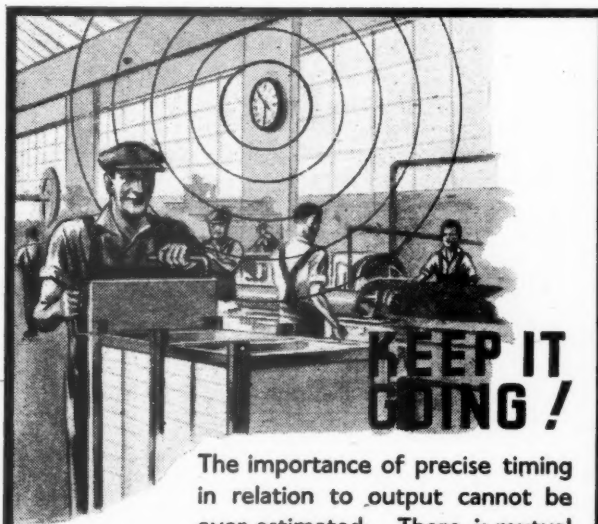
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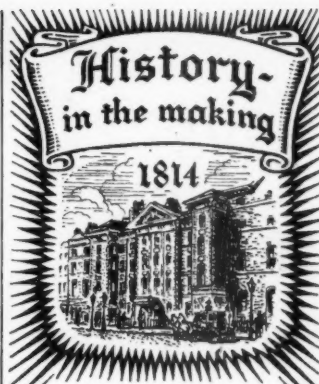


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Atishoo! (IT'S SABOTAGE)

Now comes the season of care-less coughers and sneezers—spreading germs among fellow-citizens. Colds and 'flu are responsible for the loss of 40 million days' work a year. Don't be a party to this sabotage of health, production and fighting-power!

What do I do...?

I do all I can to keep up my resistance to infection by keeping to a well-balanced diet, including fuel foods such as potatoes and oatmeal, and my full ration of fats.

I get as much fresh air as possible every day and a full quota of sleep. If I catch a cold, I use my handkerchief whenever I cough or sneeze, and so keep my germs to myself. If there is shivering and headache, I go to bed at once and call the doctor.

I remember that the nation's health is the nation's first weapon.

Issued by the Ministry of Information
Space presented to the Nation by
the Brewers' Society

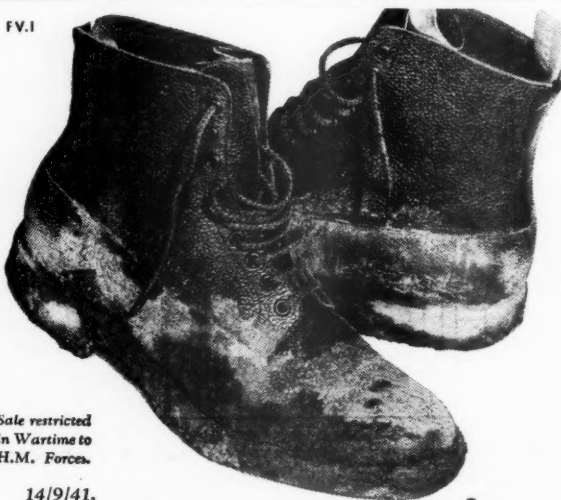
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OR is most of it lying locked away—unused—almost forgotten? Why not get a good price for it instead? There's an opportunity to sell it now. Brooches, clip and double-clip brooches, rings, bracelets, badge brooches, etc., are all worth money to-day. Send them, by registered post, to Asprey's for the fairest valuation and the best cash prices.

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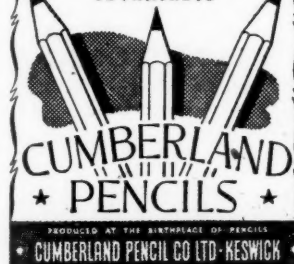


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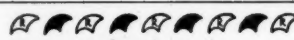
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With **KENT** Exclusive
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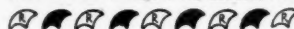


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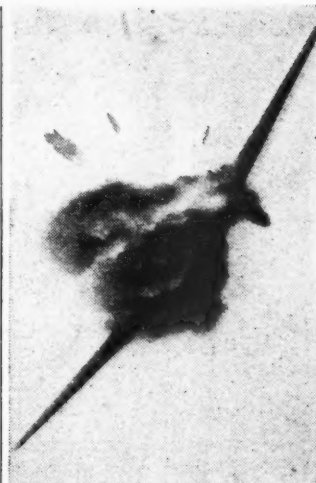
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have always had an enviable reputation, but when after the war the story of these historic days is told in detail, they will be found to have played an important part in the war effort, not only in the air, but on land and sea as well. If in the interval you find it difficult to buy K.L.G. Sparking Plugs for your own motor car, you will be tolerant, for the needs of the Services must come first.



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Destruction of a Heinkel photographed from the attacking Spitfire by camera-gun. Such records are a small part of photography's great contribution to the War effort. Photography is mobilized for war, so don't blame your dealer if he says "Sold out of Selo!" Claims of the Services, Industry and Science come first. After victory, Selo films will be plentiful again, faster and better than ever. Till then our chief task must be **SERVICING THE WAR.**

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Basic English for Basic Foods



This Heinz advertisement—the first of its number—is in Basic English. Why? Because Basic English, it seems, will become the international language of tomorrow—and Heinz are international goods.

By reading these advertisements you will have as clear an idea of the value of the 850 Basic words as you now have of the 57 foods made by Heinz.

HEINZ

57

Baked Beans — Soups — Salad Creams — Mayonnaise
H. J. HEINZ COMPANY LIMITED LONDON



The Simpson two-piece suit has a double appeal in these days of restrictions. It is not only "typical Simpson tailoring"—which means a lot to men who demand good clothes—but it is a coupon bargain. It costs only 21 coupons because there is no waistcoat. On cold days you wear it with a pull-over and most of us have one or two of these. In exclusive worsteds, it is supremely comfortable.

From the best shops in most big towns or from Simpson (Piccadilly), Ltd., 202, Piccadilly, London, W.1.

What's in a name?

"McVITIE & PRICE"

instantly suggests

Good Biscuits

and good biscuits they undoubtedly are, but, for the present, civilian supplies are sadly limited and are only available in certain areas

All the same, remember the name

"McVITIE & PRICE"

MAKERS OF GOOD BISCUITS

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Specially prepared by
Abdulla for all lovers of
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Fifth Avenue . 20 for 2/4

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PUNCH

or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCV No. 5366

December 8 1943

Charivaria

MANY of those really conscientious people who did post early for Christmas are now said to be looking round the shops for suitable Valentine Cards.

"If you have a turkey this year, stuff it with sausage meat," advises a cook. But wouldn't that clash with the bread sauce?



"MINX Fur Coat for Sale; almost new; for cash offer."
Advt. in Scottish paper.
Does she know?

"Have you noticed that a man who parts his hair in the middle generally wears a bowler hat?" asks a correspondent. And the bowler hat often fits exactly on the middle.

At least thirty per cent. of Germany's war production is said to have been affected by the Allied bomber offensive, although of course there are still quite a few cultural monuments turning out stuff in the occupied countries.

At a recent wedding the bridegroom was a kilted Scots soldier and the bride an A.R.P. ambulance driver, also in uniform. Blue was the colour-scheme of the bride's going-away trousers.

According to a salvage organizer, rubbish never commanded such high prices as it does to-day. Still, there's always a possibility that the shops will sell some of it off a little more cheaply after Christmas.

A correspondent says he is more than ever convinced of the efficacy of the Morrison shelter after a recent experience which proved conclusively that it was carol-proof.



AA

Hitler's doubles are now being deployed to receive the many headaches that are coming the Fuehrer's way.

A Russian journalist points out that no victory salvos are being fired in Berlin. He must be patient—perhaps the Wehrmacht hasn't inflicted a sufficiently severe retreat on itself yet.

There is a shortage of boot-polish. One substitute is lower spats.

It is pointed out that the present war is not producing any poets. We don't care; we still prefer peace.

We are assured that the Nazi party is on the brink of a precipice, which may explain why its leaders are showing such desperate anxiety to push each other.

A neutral journalist says that Lord Haw-Haw is not popular in Germany. Thus global unanimity has been achieved.

A reader tells us that the first time he entered a Help Yourself restaurant he didn't realize that he had actually done so. Everything seemed normal to him; he sat down and waited for attention, and nobody came.

"The Church Magazine is yet another of the Rev. Thomson's 'pet subjects,' the illustrations, printing, etc., having been executed by himself and members of the Parish. It is his proud boast that out of 248 parishioners 288 take the magazine."
Worcestershire paper.

There's such a thing as being too proud.

Hitler is said to be very fond of harp music. Then he should listen to all he can while there is yet time.

The Careful Thinker

VON SCHWEIN has got a chilblain in the marshes
And Lausig suffers from a gastric pain
And all the midland sea from Tyre to Tarshish—
Or nearly all of it—is ours again.

They say that Himmler has been down with measles
And Hitler cannot speak because of mumps
And Goebbels has been eaten up by weasels
And Ribbentrop is breaking out in lumps.

And Hanover is ravaged by colitis
And not a house is standing in Berlin
And Ley has gone to bed with dermatitis—
I thought perhaps the war was nearly fin—

But no. The facts of life are never simple.
There is no record of a serious case
Of jaundice in Japan, and not a pimple
Has yet appeared on Hirohito's face.

The seas are fairly wide, and they are seven;
When Tokyo is tottering with flu
And whooping-cough attacks the Son of Heaven
I shall believe the war is half-way through.

EVOE.

Sweeping and Dusting

I HAVE in the past told my readers, rather sketchily, how to do their housework now that they have to, but I often think I have not given them enough details about what statisticians, especially statisticians who do their own housework, aver is the most important branch of it—sweeping and dusting. Indeed, statisticians add, when you think it over quietly, housework is nothing else, or anyway not at the time. So what I want to tell my readers to-day is a few facts about the various cleaning devices we find, or get someone else to find, in every home, and the various processes by which we do our sweeping, dusting, polishing and so on; beginning with a few helpful remarks on the nature of dust.

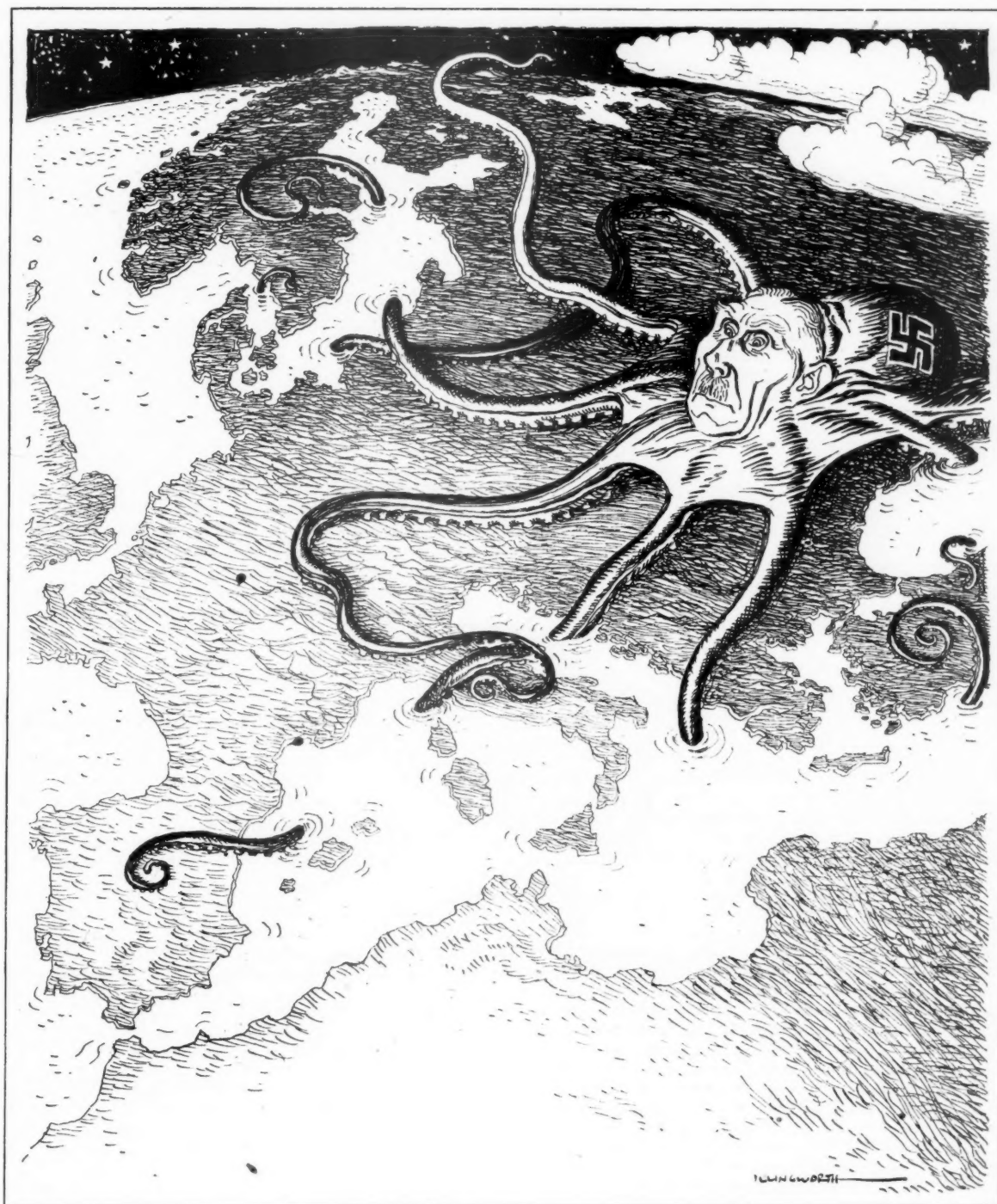
Those statisticians I was talking about aver, when they are feeling bad, that if it were not for dust we should not have to go round dusting and sweeping; adding that we should actually, because of crumbs and pieces of cotton. However that may be, it is more scientific to pin dust down as the main cause of housework; which brings us to the question: What is dust? Scientists, who have been puzzling over the subject for years (especially, again, the ones who do their own housework), tell us that it is what you get in rooms which have not been swept or dusted lately. It is also, they say, what you get in rooms which have. They say that they can only describe it as looking like dust, that they have analysed it and found that it is nothing more or less than dust, and that they have no idea where it comes from, or whether it is different dust every day, or just yesterday's back again. The whole subject, they say, is too depressing for words. So much, then, for the nature of dust. Now for its habits.

Dust, as I have said, looks like dust, but it is not always the same colour. On a pale surface it looks dark, and on a dark surface pale. This is interesting, because nothing else in Nature aims at looking different from its surroundings. Polar bears, chameleons and stick insects are the same colour as the surface you find them on. But there is a reason for everything in Nature, and the reason here is that dust exists for the purpose of being dusted, and it would never have a chance if it didn't show. Another interesting thing about dust is that it does not cling to under-surfaces, at least not anything like as much; and the reason here is the same. It would not show. It would have no purpose. Sometimes, of course, you find it hidden away in odd corners of the underneath part of a table, but scientists point out that if we find it we are under a moral obligation to dust it, so that its purpose has been fulfilled and it was not hidden away at all. I don't think that dust has any other habits, but I don't see that it needs any. Now for the means by which we get rid of dust, crumbs, pieces of cotton and all the other things statisticians have to contend with.

I shall begin with carpet-sweepers. Human nature is apt to begin with a carpet-sweeper, partly because that is the right way to begin to sweep and dust a room, but mostly, as far as human nature goes, because a carpet-sweeper has an element of what I might go so far as to call entertainment, so that human nature will often find it has got the carpet-sweeper out and started on a room long before it meant to. No doubt that was the idea in putting a little lever on one side; the public getting a strong impression that carpet-sweeper makers are in sympathy with carpet-sweeper users, and might at any time invent a bicycle-bell for the handle.

To go back to the carpet-sweeper itself, either it works or it does not; that is, either it takes the dirt out of the carpet or it puts it in. Between these two extremes comes the average carpet-sweeper, which puts the dirt into a carpet first and then takes it back about two sweeps later. A carpet-sweeper stops being average and becomes a carpet-sweeper which does not work as soon as its inside gets filled up with fluff, sand and bits of cotton, and this is where the lever comes in; it encourages the user to turn the carpet-sweeper over, prise the two lid things up and tip the fluff and sand away somewhere. This makes a tremendous difference to a carpet-sweeper; in no time it will have swept up the fluff and sand which fell on to the carpet instead of away somewhere, and quite soon it will be full again. At a certain stage of its life, no one can check up when, a carpet-sweeper gives up being even average and becomes the sort which does not work at all, ever, when it is mentally pensioned off and becomes a tradition.

Now for soft brooms, hard brooms, soft brushes and hard brushes. A soft broom or brush is for sweeping hard floors, and a hard broom or brush—my readers may guess what is coming—is for sweeping soft floors; in fact a hard broom is the same as a carpet-sweeper without the element of entertainment, so that it is little used. Human nature does sometimes use a hard brush, though, in the spirit that it uses grass-clippers after a lawn-mower; to go round the edges and produce in itself that final glow of achievement which, philosophers tell us, anything as easy as a carpet-sweeper could hardly hope to bring about. Anything swept up with a hard brush has to go into a dust-pan, that is, half into it and half underneath. By the law of diminishing returns, half what went underneath the dust-pan will go into the dust-pan next time, which all makes for a satisfied conscience. Indeed, there is a definite feeling in the minds of people sweeping and dusting a room that



THE OCTOPAPEN

"For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever."



"I wonder if you'd care to join a village poll-tax group?"

somewhere hovering round them is whatever used to personify conscience in classical times, waiting to reward them but also hoping to catch them out if they let up for a single minute. It is a funny feeling, but one my readers will recognize.

Now for dusters. A duster may be defined as something you dust a room with, and also as square or oblong—no one knows which, because no one has ever thought of holding one up to see—and bright yellow. It is true that some dusters have tried to break away from tradition by being blue and red check, but they are not quite the same thing, and no one finding a yellow duster and a check one in the same drawer has ever chosen the check one unless from motives dimly underlaid with superstition. Psychologists do not know why dusters should be yellow, but they think it is to cheer the public up, like the levers on carpet-sweepers. As a matter of fact, though, the public rather enjoys dusting; because by the time it has got to the dusting stage of a room it is not itself but someone who is dead keen on getting the room as clean as possible. This phase will carry the public through the dusting and half-way through the floor-polishing stage, and then something in the public mind will snap, leaving it with half a floor-surround to polish and no impetus. It says a lot for human nature that somewhere within itself it can fetch up the will-power to go on, if not quite until it has done as much as it thought it would start with, at least enough to convince itself that it has done too much; and this is a funny feeling too, but again one which my readers will recognize.

Snowfall

IN O what freakish guise the world is decked
This winter morning!
Snow so teases the eye, tantalizes so the senses
With sorcery, that the mind is tricked
Back into childhood and a child's fond fancies.
Now winter without warning
Has conjured a muffled and most lovely world
Where pillowed passing feet delight the ear,
And birds (lightly, as spiders go)
Pencil their busy pathways in the snow.

So suddenly in the mind there is uncurled
The child's mind, and the vision clear
That sees the trees
Tasselled with shining snow, windless and still
Like tufts of fleece or drifts of summer cloud.
The child untroubled sees
Only the quiet fields and the white hill,
And runs and laughs aloud . . .
With no foreknowledge of a foe for whom
Out-battled, winter should prepare her tomb.

M. E. R.

Going to School

IT is 8.30 A.M., and I am off to school. Or I shall be in a minute, when I have strapped the attaché-case on to my carrier.

Ah, one of the straps has broken, so it will take a little longer: fortunately I have some string.

Now it is on, and I am wheeling the machine up the steep stretch of lane to the rise where I can mount.

I meet the postman coming down. We wish one another good morning, he says there is nothing for me, but the Russians are doing well and no mistake, and we agree that the weather is showery for biking.

People once laughed at my bicycle and asked me what make it was.

I could never answer them, having obtained it for twenty-five shillings from a man whose whim it was to collect different portions of different bicycles and assemble them.

But people no longer deride the magnificent mongrel. Instead they offer me £10 for it, and when I refuse they try to steal it.

These reflections soothe my vanity on the first stage of my journey to school.

I have now mounted and am approaching the corner where Mrs. Daubeney's dog always rushes out at me. It is a pedigree terrier and is no doubt affronted by the hybrid origin of my bicycle. I take off my pump and swing it expertly. The terrier swerves and misses.

I round the corner and pass Goddard, who, ever since he found me collecting twigs for kindling in the lane adjoining his field, has nursed a dark suspicion that I mean to pull down his hedge and let his cattle loose. He touches his cap dubiously, and I respond with a devil-may-care greeting, remembering to brake cautiously as I near the main road.

It is as well that I do so, for an American convoy is whirling round the bend at alarming speed. A cadaverous member of their Traffic Corps is directing the procession with a piece of board, which he holds up at intervals with a grim smile. We exchange greetings, and I suppose politely that his compatriots find it hard to accustom themselves to driving on the left of the road.

"Well—no," he answers. "I don't reckon they find that so tough; but most of these drivers here are ex-cowboys and can't seem to get rid of the notion they're still riding hosses."

After that I decide to watch the

convoy pass, even if it makes me a little late.

It does not delay me long, and I am still in good time, because the 8.45 bus, which is seldom more than a quarter of an hour late, has not overtaken me when I approach "The Stag-hound," where the usual group of passengers is waiting.

I take off my hat to Lady Philbrick, who bows back graciously, and I

IN MEMORIAM

The deeply regretted death of E. M. Delafield (Mrs. A. P. Dashwood) is a sad loss not only to her many friends, but to a large circle of readers in these pages and elsewhere, who were delighted by the sureness of her skill. They valued the never-failing ingenuity which she brought as a critic and humorist to every folly and absurdity of domestic life. She had contributed to *Punch* almost every week for more than eleven years, and nearly up to the end of her last illness. It was some time before her work, though well-known, had its due esteem from critics; but those who knew her books written at the end of the last war and just after it were astonished at her power to detect and expose humbug, self-importance, careerism and conceit. The woman who by self-imposed martyrdom inflicts constant trouble and annoyance on her family and friends, the fussy, the foolish and the vain were the constant targets of her wit. No one was less guilty of such weaknesses herself. None if she had detected them in herself would have been more swift and ready to laugh at them. She had a host of imitators, but they never rivalled her talent at its best. For herself and for her writing she will be greatly mourned and missed.

include in my salutation Mrs. Merrilees—who gives me a cheerful grin while ignoring Lady Philbrick as pointedly as she herself is being ignored—and also Miss Sharp, with whom it is safest to keep on cordial terms. I further acknowledge with a discreet smile the broad wink which is old George Walker's comment on the social situation, and I accomplish all this, while negotiating the turn from the main road into the village street, just as the bus pulls up behind me.

I am treading a pretty pedal when I hear my name called, and there is Mrs. Pinkney, breathless, green-trousered, and towing her first-born, who is a day-boy.

"Oh—good morning!—I say, would you mind very much taking Francis up to school, please? That is kind of you! Oliver's in bed with a temperature and I can't leave him—will you explain!—and I don't know about bringing Francis back again. . . ."

I agree to return Francis Pinkney on my homeward journey, express a heartfelt hope that Oliver will soon be well again, and remark that the Russians are doing well.

At the Green I pause to leave my bicycle at Walter Friend's, and we take the short cut over the hill, which is always better than risking irreplaceable tyres on the Park drive. Francis stops to do up his shoe, while I fidget with my attaché-case and look at my watch.

As we climb to the crest there is a succession of explosions, and in the distance a plane circles, trailing a red target.

Francis is anxious to see more of this, but I tell him sternly that he must keep moving.

"I hope to goodness Oliver will soon be all right again!" he mutters morosely.

I re-echo the sentiment and applaud this evidence of brotherly affection, noting at the same time that the school clock is fast and says ten minutes past nine. None the less we shall do it, with some minutes to spare.

Our path now runs down a gentle slope to the front door, beyond which I see the matron's white overall.

We wish one another good morning, and I deliver Francis, together with Mrs. Pinkney's message about Oliver. As I am speaking, the matron looks from Francis to me and then back to Francis, who edges stealthily away.

"I suppose," she says, "it was pretty wet coming over the hill?"

"Fairly," I agree uneasily. "It's a bit showery." And I begin to say that the Russians are doing well.

But the matron refuses to be sidetracked.

"He ought to have gone back for his gum-boots," she remarks, and adds wearily—"These mothers!"

She does not actually say "These masters!"

But I know. And she knows that I know. . . .

Ah, well! At any rate we are in time for school. ~

At the Pictures

THIS OTHER EDEN

A QUALITY in which the English take pride is the ability to laugh at themselves... but usually they forget to laugh at their overweening pride in that quality. *The Demi-Paradise* (Director: ANTHONY ASQUITH) is built up almost entirely on the principle of subtly flattering the English audience by causing it to believe that it is being uproariously amused at its own less admirable traits, while in fact it is being amused mostly, as usual, by the poor foreigner who is baffled by them for the first time. LAURENCE OLIVIER, with what seemed to me a convincing accent, is the poor foreigner, a young Russian engineer who comes over to consult a shipbuilding firm about a propeller he has invented. In the bosom of this shipbuilding firm he finds everything English audiences are most fond of, including that favourite relationship of romantic fiction between the "infinitely wise" elderly man and his beloved granddaughter whom he tenderly advises about her love-affairs.

It is a bright enough piece, almost continuously entertaining although a little handicapped by being cast in the form of a reminiscent narrative (the engineer, back in Russia, tells two British visitors about his discovery of England) which involves the use of such regrettable linking phrases, or spoken sub-titles, as "And in the months that followed..." Mr. OLIVIER is very good indeed, and the numerous small parts are admirably taken by competent players all being as English as (I am stung in slightly irritated reaction to use this American phrase) all get out.

Whether because of *Un Carnet de Bal* or not, JULIEN DUVIVIER seems irretrievably doomed by Hollywood to direct bundles of short stories; but admittedly the bundle of three pretentiously called *Flesh and Fantasy* has the inestimable ROBERT BENCHLEY to hold it together. As always when Mr. BENCHLEY appears, one wishes there

could have been twice as much of him. Here he purports to be a man worried by occult matters connected with premonitions, prevision, dreams, superstition and one thing and another: the stories that make up the film being examples bearing on this kind of

a Charles Boyer film on a small scale, a not very well-digested mixture of emotion, sensationalism and light comedy such as Mr. BOYER has been given more than once before. He plays *The Great Gaspar*, a tight-rope walker who dreams that he falls during a performance, and who afterwards meets the lady (BARBARA STANWYCK) he dreamt was there at the time.

There are other celebrated players in the picture, the most successful of whom I think is THOMAS MITCHELL as the fortune-teller in the Wilde-based episode. As a whole the film makes a scrappy impression and is not helped by camera-work full of tricks, odd angles and brooding shadows, designed presumably to make everything seem more supernatural. Mr. BENCHLEY, who goes away at the end without getting the point (just as we do), remains my happiest memory of the whole affair.

There is too little also of the new Disney, which also in its way is a group of three short pieces. *Saludos Amigos* lasts for forty minutes and presents the reactions of Mr. DISNEY's unit of artists and technicians to Latin America. This at least is the thread on which is strung the three more or less self-contained "shorts": one about *Donald Duck* ("a well-known North American tourist"), one about *Goofy*, one about *Pedro*, a baby aeroplane who gets over the Andes all by himself with the mail. All three are funny and contain remarkably brilliant scenes; the piece does not pretend to be anything more than a miscellany, and as such it is highly enjoyable.

Let's Face It (Director: SIDNEY LANFIELD) I saw because of BOB HOPE, but even he can't do a great deal with this inflated effort, which suggests a twenty-minute comedy given "big-picture" players, time and trimmings. The characters are cardboard symbols ("the wives," "the husbands," "the girls," "the boys") and there is a cheap sort of feeling about the whole thing. But it has one or two good laughs. R. M.



[The Demi-Paradise]

HIS DEMI-HEAVENLY HOSTS

thing, supposed to be found by a spectacled friend in a book in the library where Mr. BENCHLEY is gloomily coping with his hangover. One is a much-adapted version of Wilde's

remains my happiest memory of the whole affair.



[Flesh and Fantasy]

THE PALMIST'S PROGNOSTICATION

Podgers THOMAS MITCHELL
Tyler EDWARD G. ROBINSON

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime, and another also has an old-fashioned "well-made-short-story" atmosphere and is reminiscent of *The Happy Hypocrite*, though Sir Max Beerbohm is not credited with any part of the idea; the third is just

time and trimmings. The characters are cardboard symbols ("the wives," "the husbands," "the girls," "the boys") and there is a cheap sort of feeling about the whole thing. But it has one or two good laughs. R. M.

Now, isn't that Nice!

(Mr. Punch's Special Reporter examines the Christmas bargains in Oxford Street.)

WOOSNAM'S have a very attractive iodized identity-locket in a wide range of colours. Price 12s. 6d.

Milner and Strumpf have a new line in calendars. Anniversaries of famous trials are marked in green, while the giver's birthday is done in purple and old gold. At the same shop one can obtain a ready-reckoner for *lire* and pounds sterling with a glossary of harsh Italian phrases suitable for inclusion in any argument with grasping tradesmen. It is designed for the Eighth Army.

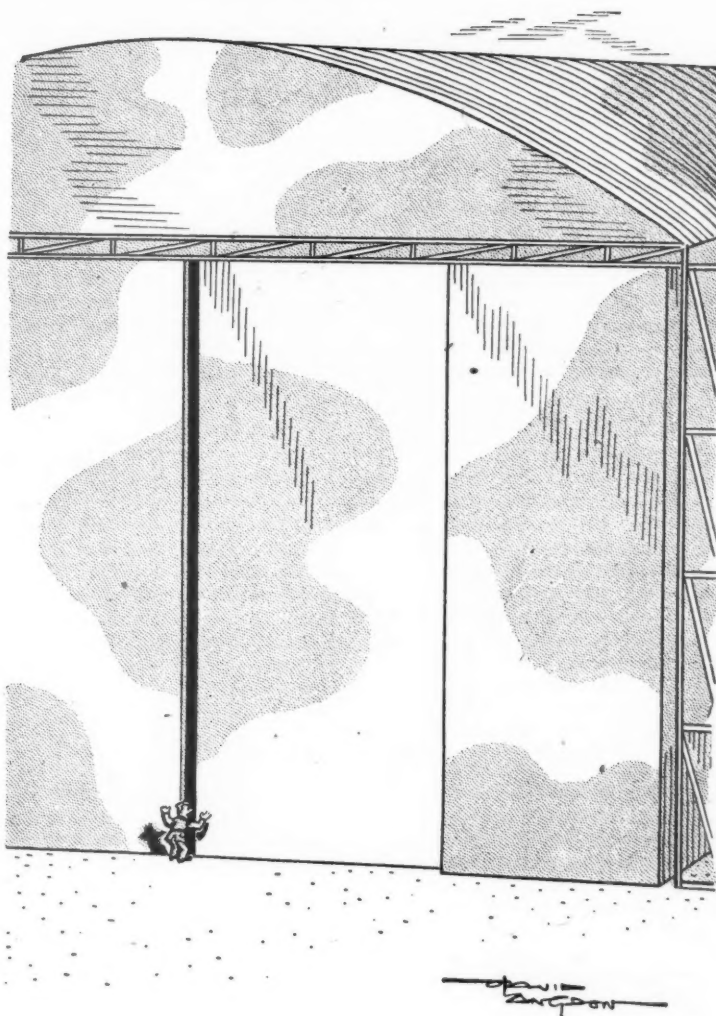
Pilbrook and Cormorant Ltd. have a very neat little gadget which should prove a boon to those fire-watchers who sleep on the floor. It consists of a rectangular frame (6 ft. by 2 ft. 6 ins.) made of gutter-piping salvaged from the East End. It fits tightly round the ordinary mattress and when filled with water forms an efficient trap for all nocturnal insects of the beetle family. At 7s. 6d. the "Fireguard's Moat" is really quite cheap. It can be obtained in brown, green and Air Force blue.

Gorge's have a neat filing-cabinet for reconstruction pamphlets. It measures 5 by 3 by 6 (in yards) and is priced at fifty guineas.

Baxter and Wosseck (late Wosseck and Baxter) are selling a new type of can-opener designed specially to facilitate the salvage of scrap metal. A few turns of the screw (the contraption looks something like a letter-press) and the toughest can is flattened ready for the collector. The contents of the can are squeezed out through gullies cut in the floor of the press and are served by pipe-line direct to the table.

The Land and Sea Stores still have a few L.D.V. arm-bands left. These coupon-less relics are being bought speculatively by many people anxious to start movements in post-war London. Our guess is that the London Doughnut Vendors will be the first to wear them.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



"Excuse me—A.C.2 Wiggle to report to the Adjutant, please."

The Stream

THE laughing stream of flashing clarity
That hustles between low crumbling sods,
Flowing with the unconscious fluidness of charity
With the all-giving undemand of blessings from the gods,
Shrills and chatters with winter's bounty,
Tinkles the ice-bowed drinking sedge,
Bears most jauntily, through a county,
Fleet of long-dead leaves to another county's edge.
Sweet the tangible breath of heaving-sided cattle
Standing stolidly in the olive rime,
While raucous screams of arguing jays in battle
Pierce the early morning of this deep-stilled lordly time.

O well-remembered stream of cold unsullied purity,
Dear-loved stream, your spring shall never dry.
I swear again, in my maturity,
Though seen no more, you flow for me until I die.

English Islands or Lost Off Labrador

X

I WAS studying this morning the navigation of the jelly-fish. In our swift rushing waters at home they seem to swish helplessly past and are gone. Here in the clear water, where the currents are less, they hang about. This little fellow, from above, was like a rather dirty poached egg, except that the white was cut into an eight-pointed star. Below he had a concentration of pink frillies which would have made the fortune of a Can-can dancer, and long streamers of white chiffon astern.

Most of us think that the jelly-fish just drifts: but he is no more "just drifting" than the lighters or barges you see going by the Houses of Parliament, driven by one waterman with a sweep or "dredging" with the anchor down. The jelly-fish, like them, is navigated with confidence and skill. He draws up his canopy, the white of the egg, till it is like an umbrella blown inside out. Back it goes again, and he is one stroke nearer home. There was only a trickle of tide but he made good headway against it, and seemed to move in any direction at will. Why he should choose to stem the tide when he might have gone with it, I cannot say. No doubt he felt like a quiet Sunday in the Punch Bowl.

Such are the simple pleasures of the fog-bound. It is a great thing to be able to occupy yourself, whatever the conditions; and it is a prime defect of our times that so few citizens can. They must have the cinema—or cards—or cross-words—or Somebody Calling. They cannot even instruct themselves when they have the opportunity—which makes nonsense of much of the chat and clamour about "equality of opportunity". Every grown-up in this ship is a seafarer of sorts—and even the boy, Reggie, seasick though he was the first day, will probably end that way. These seven, no, eight days in the fog should have been a golden chance for all of them—yes, even our fine Captain—to make themselves better seamen. I

have on board Bowditch's fat *American Practical Navigator*, Reid's *Nautical Almanac*, and a sextant—all the raw materials for a master mariner. Bowditch, too, contains much easy and interesting reading about local matters, the movement of ice, the Labrador Polar Current, and so forth.

Well, I spent some time on the magnetic variation of the compass with the Padre, and I think he has got it; but he stopped there. Reggie is a Scout and claims to know semaphore. I started him on Morse two days ago, and sat over him for a quarter of an hour. Then I went back to my own work—after all I have the Future of Newfoundland to settle. I gave Bowditch to the Captain. He bent over it politely for ten minutes. He then said, "There's a lot of reading in that", and went out. Reggie knows a letter or two, but my educational campaign is over.

No doubt, if bits of Bowditch were read out "on the radio" they would all sit goggle-eyed and listen. That is the sad thing. No information is worth getting nowadays unless you can get it by turning a knob.

I must be going a little queer myself. For I find a guilty comfort in logarithms. My poor wife says it is a vice: and she may be right. But whenever my tooth aches and I weary of fog and the Future of Newfoundland, I get my Bowditch and go over my old sights again (there being no sun for a new one): I forget my tooth and the troubles of writing and I emerge from cosecants and haversines refreshed. (I still have no notion what a haversine is; but I know how to use them—as you know how to use the short wave.)

This morning, about 1000 (Local Mean Time), a sadly undehydrated sun showed wanly for a minute or two over the south-eastern wall of the Punch Bowl. I rushed for my sextant, or rather the sextant I borrowed from the American Doctor Olds, who runs the fine hospital at Twillingate (the good work being done by Americans

in Newfoundland should make us ashamed). I took a snap sight of the sun, just before he faded into the fog, bringing him down to the water's edge four hundred yards away. Then I did the sums and got our position.

Say what you like, this is an exciting though toilsome business—and saddening if you find that you are three miles away. This came out exactly. First, by the Marq St. Hilaire method (with which, no doubt, you are familiar) I showed pretty clearly that we were in the Punch Bowl, Seal Islands, Labrador (which relieved our Captain considerably). Then, to check, I worked out my latitude (by a new method I found in Bowditch and have not seen in any English book) and longitude.

My latitude line ($53^{\circ} 15' 0''$ N) ran through the spot where the ship lies, on the chart: my longitude ($55^{\circ} 45' 8''$ W) was about three hundred yards out, on the western edge of the Punch Bowl—and since my only chronometer was a wrist-watch and ten seconds means two and a half miles that was not so bad.

But you laugh. What's the point, as my poor family has often cried, of proving that you are where you knew you were before? There were friendly laughs in London River when I used my sextant in Gravesend Reach, or "shot the sun" or Venus at Westminster Pier. There was a mocking paragraph in some paper about my being able to prove that I was under Hammersmith Bridge and not in the Heligoland Bight.

Very well, laugh, old boy. But, you see, that is not such a very easy thing to do. Ask the first hundred naval officers you meet in the street if they could get their position with a sextant under Hammersmith Bridge (even if it was not foggy and the sun was unclouded and clear, and they had chronometers and midshipmen to help them). About a hundred of them will answer "No."

The professional navigator must have a "sea horizon" and a good



Gum—

round sun. Not having a sea horizon in London River, except in Sea Reach, I devised means of doing without it—including a formula of my own which I have not found in any book. Using this, any student can practise the use of the sextant, learn the different formulae, and find his way about on land, or river, or lakes miles from the sea.

"Oh, of course, if it's educational..." I hear you say. "But what practical use can all this be?"

Well, it would have been helpful, for example, in the Libyan Desert. And if you had knocked about on this confetti coast you would know another good answer. All the islands for hundreds of miles look exactly alike. Our Captain knows them all and came here knowingly before the fog fell thick. But suppose you come groping in out of the fog from sea and anchor at the first island you touch, not knowing what it is. You look at the chart and say, "This must be Boulter's Rock". I look at the chart and say, "No, these are the Seal Islands". So far, your bet is as good as mine. But by the Haddock method, if I can see the sun (or the moon, or a star) for a moment or two, I can prove (all going well) that we are lying in a small circular haven called the Punch Bowl, as I did this morning (and, by the way, one of the crew said we were in Duck, or some other, islands, and we had a bet about it). But that is something that the first hundred naval officers you meet in Piccadilly could not do. So let us have less laughter about Hammer-smith Bridge, old boy.

(After all this boasting I should like to add that it does not always come off quite so well as it did this morning.)

The saddening thing is that we are demonstrably and immovably still where we were. A. P. H.

Office Runner

ONE of the minor problems in a Company of East African natives is to find an efficient runner for the Company Office. Our

Kugombas, for one thing, are not fond of running. Unless spurred on by threats or promises they proceed at a slow lolloping walk, which becomes slower and slower as the weather gets hotter and hotter. Nor are they much faster on the Company bicycle, though it is a grand sight to see one of them sitting bolt upright in the saddle and slowly moving his legs up and down.

So when Michaeler fell ill and was whisked off to hospital Captain Hollyhock sent out an agonized cry to the Platoon Commanders asking for an intelligent and agile boy, capable of reading and writing, and speaking Swahili, Lagomba, Arabic and English. Three of us made Nil returns at once, but Sympson said that he thought that Yowana Mukasa would suit.

"He isn't particularly agile or intelligent," he admitted, "and of course he only speaks Swahili and a little Lagomba, but I want to get rid of him from my platoon because he upsets me on parade. He has a way of fixing me with his eye that is most disconcerting."

"Can he read and write?" asked Captain Hollyhock dubiously. "He isn't any use unless he can at least sign his own name when they give him registered letters at the post office."

"You expect a great deal for thirty shillings a month," said Sympson, "but if I find he can't read or write I will teach him."

So Yowana Mukasa was installed in Company Office, and Sympson attempted to teach him to read and write. Unfortunately Yowana Mukasa's English is extremely limited, and Sympson's knowledge of Swahili is even more so.

"An hour every evening after the day's work is done," Sympson had said in the first flush of his enthusiasm, "and Yowana Mukasa will be reading and writing as if he had been born to it."

The first evening he spent in trying to teach Yowana Mukasa the letter A. "It's quite easy," he said—"A for apple, A for aunt."

"Ndio, effendi," said Yowana cheerfully. "Ndio" is a Swahili word that does not have an English counterpart.

It may mean "Yes," but more often it just means "I don't know what you are talking about, but you are a white officer and can send me to prison if I annoy you, so please continue."

Sympson continued, and at the end of the evening he discovered that Yowana Mukasa had learned precisely nothing.

"I must try a new technique," he said. "After all, there is no need for him to be able to read, or to write anything but his own name. If he can sign receipts for registered letters and that sort of thing, it is all we want."

So next evening he wrote a big signature "Yowana Mukasa" and told Yowana to copy it. Very slowly Yowana made the attempt, and the finished product was not at all bad. Then Yowana gave a huge chuckle, and made Yowana Mukasas right down to the bottom of the page and then all over the blotting-paper. There was no holding him.

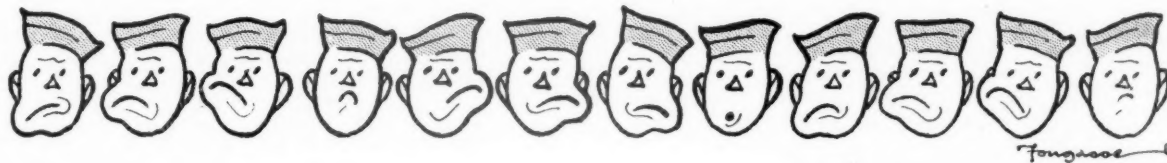
"When anything needs signing," said Sympson, through Corporal Mark, our interpreter, to be on the safe side, "all you have to do is to copy Yowana Mukasa, just like that."

For once, it was clear, Sympson had the laugh of us, but the education of Yowana had a curious sequel. Every day at 1530 Major Fibbing signs the letters, which the typist Verichafu leaves on his desk. He then hands them to Yowana Mukasa, who licks up the envelopes and rides off on his bicycle to the post.

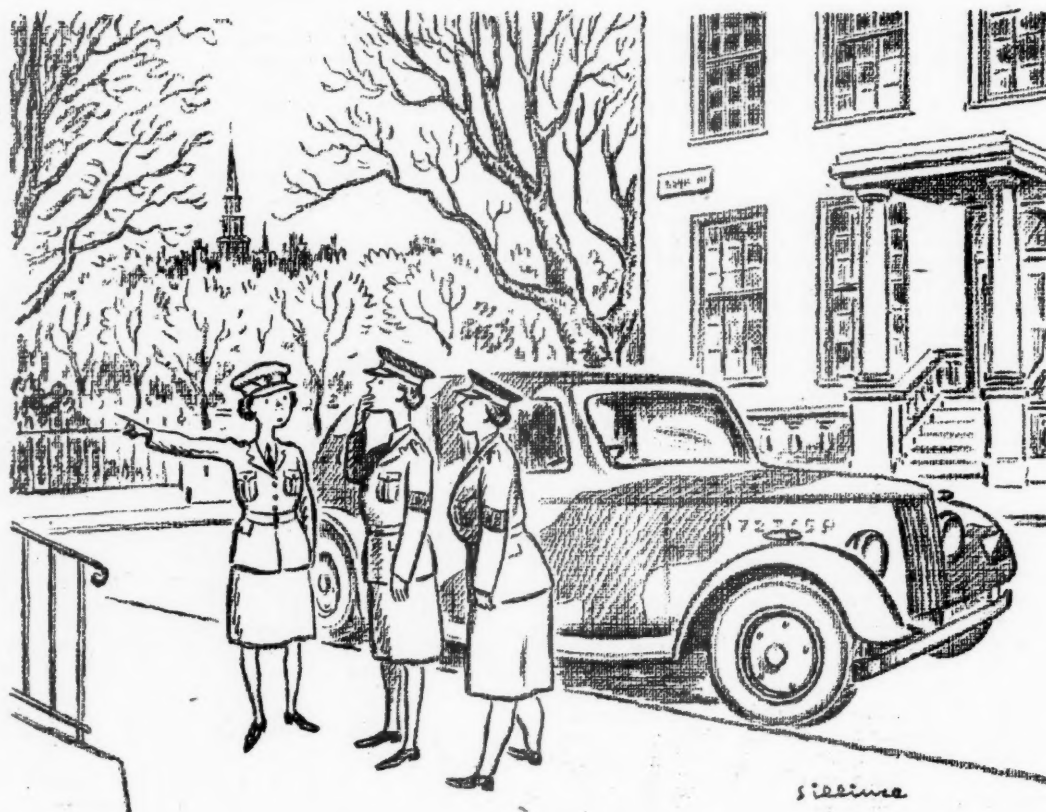
Last Tuesday a great bundle of "Returns" came in from Group, and Major Fibbing left them on his desk until he could summon up strength to deal with them. Yowana, seeing them unsigned and lying beside the post, felt that his chance had come at last. He was not sure exactly where to put his signature, but he banged it somewhere near the middle and hoped for the best.

The Colonel rang up next day.

"He must be a remarkable man, this Yowana Mukasa of yours," he said. "I see he has bubonic plague, is recommended for a medal for conspicuous gallantry, and refuses to be vaccinated."



a study in perpetual motion.



"And while I went in there with his secret documents the Colonel simply disappeared from the car!"

The Wreck of the Schooner "Incubus"

THE boy stood on the burning deck
Drinking the blude-red wine;
Ha, ha, quoth he, full plain I see
To sail this new ship of mine.

Eastward from Campobello
Towards the reef of Norman's Woe,
Half-owre, half-owre to Aberdour
His eyes go to and fro.

All in a hot and copper sky
Glimmered the white moonshine;
The fishers had heard the Water-sprite,
It perched for vespers nine.

The Prince's sister screamed to him,
Her locks were yellow as gold,
And the skipper had taken his little daughter
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The silly buckets on the deck
Were left to Heaven's bright rain,

And now the Storm-blast came and he
Had sailed the Spanish main.

Oh, haste thee, haste, the lady cries,
Eftsoons his hand dropped he;
Seemed all on fire, within, around,
And gurlly grew the sea.

Upon the whirl where sank the ship
That never mair cam hame,
He sat where festal bowls went round
That flattered on the faem.

To Noroway, to Noroway,
They drift in close embrace;
The king sits in Dunfermline town
With broad and burning face.

Oh, sleep it is a gentle thing,
Ere sorrow break its chain;
A sadder and a wiser man
He never smiled again. J. B. N.



THE KEEPER OF SILENCES

"I represent the papers of the entire world. To what do you attribute your eternal reputation for getting in last with the news?"

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, November 30th.—House of Commons: Things are Promised.

Wednesday, December 1st.—House of Commons: Much Ado About—Mosley.

Thursday, December 2nd.—House of Commons: Mr. Bevin, Ballot-Master.

Tuesday, November 30th.—To-day the Commons talked about reconstruction, and post-war, and all that. Nobody seemed too sure what was wanted in either department, but most of the speakers offered a piece or two for inclusion in the jig-saw. Some of the bits looked a little queerly-shaped, as jig-saw pieces are apt to until the picture nears completion. But, as the debate went on, one felt that all the pieces were there, once there is time to put them together.

Some Members showed impatience about the time the assembly seemed likely to take and the adequacy of the supply of pieces. Sir JOHN WARDLAW-MILNE, for instance, got quite angry about the miserable 5,000,000 houses the Government propose to build. Pointing dramatically to the Treasury Bench (which seemed to warp at his very gesture) Sir JOHN uttered a modernized version of the "We want eight—and we won't wait!" of other days.

In other words, Sir JOHN wants a lot more houses a lot quicker than the Government plan to provide them.

Captain POOLE, on the Labour Benches, had been sitting on the edge of the seat throughout this speech, and he leaped up to outdo Sir JOHN in impatience and scorn. "Five million houses in ten years!" he gasped. "Five million in ten years! A fantastically long time-limit!"

Mr. OLIVER LYTTTELTON, the Minister of Supply, disappeared beneath the Treasury Bench. His Parliamentary Private Secretary, Captain SOMERSET DE CHAIR, dived also, and they were invisible (except for a most unconventional view) for some time. The Lobby rumour was that Mr. LYTTTELTON was searching for a magic wand with which to produce five hundred million houses in ten minutes, and thus satisfy even his severest critics, but this report lacks confirmation in well-informed political quarters.

Seeing the crestfallen expression of the Minister, Captain POOLE explained that all he asked was a mere 2,000,000 houses a year immediately after the war. Mr. LYTTTELTON's expression clearly said: "Oh, that! Of course, old

boy, any little thing of that sort. Just drop me a note!"

Then Left Wing Mr. EMANUEL SHINWELL made one of the best speeches of his Parliamentary career. That, of Mr. SHINWELL, is saying a very great deal, for he has made many fine speeches. To-day he ranged through the whole field of public affairs—foreign policy, trade, politics—in an oration (no less word describes it) that spellbound his hearers.

True blue Conservatives found themselves (obviously to their own surprise) loudly cheering him when he said "everyone wants this country of ours to remain great," convinced Socialists



A NEW "IMPERIAL THINKER"
MR. SHINWELL

"I must make some reference to . . . a bid for the leadership of the Conservative Party by my hon. friend . . ."—Mr. Lyttelton.

(no less to their own surprise) caught themselves in the act of cheering his view that, if there *must* be monopolies, they should be State monopolies. The Liberals, headed by Sir PERCY HARRIS, listened hopefully for something to cheer on their own, but Mr. SHINWELL seemed to have overlooked them.

Mr. LYTTTELTON recited a long speech from wads—and wads—and wads of typewritten notes, in the course of which he told the House that after the war there would be three insistent demands: (1) for consumer goods—boots, and clothes, and pots and pans and things; (2) for houses; and (3) for "arrears of essential maintenance."

It was not very clear what this last insistent demand was all about. But the Minister promised that the Reports of Barlow, Scott, Uthwatt, Beveridge, Brewer, Gurney, Stewer, Hawk, Whiddon and Thomas Coble would be carefully considered and as much of them as circumstances permitted should be given effect to—as soon as circumstances permitted.

There was a slight discussion on the "V" cigarettes issued to the troops of the Eighth Army—as if they had not borne enough. Mr. CULVERWELL said they could not be described in "Parliamentary language," but coyly declined an offer from the entire House (in perfect unison) to dispense with that formality for the purpose of greater accuracy. Mr. BARTLE BULL, however, mentioned that the smokes were known to the troops as "Spit-fires," but, judging from the somewhat disproportionate hilarity this remark caused, it might have been (shall we say?) a euphemism.

Mr. Speaker announced to a hushed House that Home Guard Sergeant GEORGE RICKARDS, Conservative M.P. for Skipton, had died suddenly. Thousands of visitors had benefited from his uncanny knowledge of the innumerable twists and turns and ups and downs of the vast Houses of Parliament. And his Home Guard colleagues mourn the passing of a truly Good Companion.

Wednesday, December 1st.—Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, the Air Minister, present in person, was pressed about the utility of bombing Berlin. He reeled off a long list of war factories to be found within the German capital's boundaries, and then added that if he were limited to one single target in Germany, he would choose Berlin.

The fierce cheer that rose from the House showed that that would also be the choice of the Back-Benches. Sir ARCHIBALD mentioned that the Allied Air Forces had hurled 13,000 tons of bombs on Germany recently, what time the Germans had dropped only 120 tons on us and, said he, the proportion would increase.

Colonel OLIVER STANLEY neatly pulled the leg of good-humoured Mr. IAN HANNAH, who asked a question about the medical services of the Gold Coast. The question was so wide, said the Colonial Secretary gently, that he thought it best to hand his honourable friend the latest report on the subject—a hefty volume which left Mr. HANNAH a little dazed, but, on the whole, satisfied.

Questions over, the House settled down to a long debate on the release from Holloway Prison of Sir OSWALD

and Lady MOSLEY. Settled down is perhaps hardly the term, for there was a lot of noise in the early part of the debate, and Mr. Speaker had to intervene very firmly, warning shouting Members that, sooner or later, someone on their side would want a quiet hearing and could not reasonably expect it unless his friends had been quiet while others spoke.

Mr. G. S. WOODS moved an amendment to the Loyal Address—thanking The KING for his speech from the Throne—regretting that “His Majesty’s present advisers” had released Sir OSWALD, “an act calculated to retard the war effort and cause misunderstanding at home and abroad.”

Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, the Home Secretary, who was “on trial” (having made the offending decision), walked in with a big scarlet dispatch box which he placed before him on the table. Then he sat with folded arms, listening to the speeches and the interruptions.

He laughed with the rest when Mr. WOODS blandly explained that the motion was not intended as a motion of censure on the Government or on the Home Secretary. Sir IRVING ALBERY, from the Conservative Benches, asked the SPEAKER whether he would have allowed the amendment to be moved had he known it was *not* a censure on the Government. Mr. Speaker replied that he knew nothing of a Member’s motives—was, indeed, concerned only with the orderliness of its wording.

Mr. WOODS, gazing genially on the Home Secretary, remarked that even the best of men made mistakes sometimes. Mr. MORRISON blushed, but bowed his acceptance of the description.

Then Mr. WOODS suddenly abandoned the sweet reasonableness line and spoke of one law for the rich, another for the poor, whereupon Lady ASTOR, amid cheers, told him that he ought to be ashamed of himself. Mr. WOODS added the mysterious remark that MOSLEY was not an individual, and seemed surprised when the Conservatives laughed.

Mr. PARKER seconded, commenting that people who did not accept democratic views should not have the ordinary rights of democracy.

“Who decides who’s a democrat?” asked Commander AGNEW, awkwardly, and the House repeated the query forte-fortissimo, but received no reply.

Sir LAMBERT WARD assessed the advertisement value to Sir OSWALD of the campaign at about £100,000. Fascism in this country was dead, he declared. With bowed heads a great

many Members—went out to snatch a meal.

Sir DONALD SOMERVELL, the Attorney-General, gave counsel’s opinion on the Defence Regulation, No. 18B, under which Sir OSWALD had been detained. So far from having the duty to consider political matters in making his decisions, the Home Secretary was precluded from doing so. MOSLEY was still under rigid supervision, and would be.

The debate went on, with one side and then the other putting its view, and neither convincing the other. Everybody was waiting for Mr. MORRISON to “get in.” He sat silent and watchful, making notes, sending for data, missing nothing. At last, in a crowded House, he got together his papers and rose.

His first words brought people to the edges of their seats in eager expectation, for there is nothing the House likes more than a real good row—especially when the chief participant is a man of the Home Secretary’s rhetorical ability. They were not disappointed.

He hoped, said Mr. MORRISON, that he might be permitted to hit back, having been given a grim time in recent weeks on account of his decision in the Mosley case. The irony of it all was that he was perhaps the fiercest of all opponents of Fascism, and had suffered from its manifestations in the East End of London. But if he were asked to imprison people merely because he did not like them or their

views, that would endanger civil liberties, and Habeas Corpus, Magna Charta, and all that would be no more. If they wanted judicial functions exercised *with* political bias, the critics could first try their hands at drafting the Regulation authorizing this departure, and then—get another Home Secretary to carry it out.

This direct challenge reduced the critics to glum silence, and drew from the Government’s supporters a roar of cheers.

There had been too much mob hysteria, Mr. MORRISON said, and judicial decisions were never well made in that sort of atmosphere. Lord DAWSON OF PENN and other eminent doctors had said there was danger to Sir OSWALD’s life in further imprisonment, and he did not feel justified in taking the risk of letting him—an untried man—die in gaol if it could be avoided with safety to the State. That, indeed, would have been a shameful abuse of 18B.

“The House can fire me,” the Minister said, “but it can do nothing about this case. If the release is revoked, Mosley can go to the High Court and get the revocation quashed, because the decision is *wrongly* made.”

Rapping the Table, Mr. MORRISON said he did not give twopence for the Upper Classes, and would not be influenced in their favour. He had in fact already released more than 600 detainees, none of them rich. And if he had to make the Mosley decision again, knowing that he was to face all he had gone through in the last few weeks, he would do it rather than have the feeling that he had shirked his duty.

The House liked this forthright statement, and gave Mr. MORRISON an ovation. Then, amid a lot of shouting, the division was taken. The question was, how many Labour M.P.s would “revolt” against the Government, and there was a hush as the tellers stepped, bowing, up to the Table.

Ayes, 62—Noes, 327.

The tumult and the shouting died, the Cabinet and the critics departed. Much Ado, as one Member put it, About Mosley.

Thursday, December 2nd.—Mr. BEVIN announced that some thousands of young men and youths are to be chosen by ballot to work in the coal-mines, to get for Britain’s war effort that precious material on which so very much depends. As Members rightly said, these men, armed with picks and shovels, will as surely make their contribution to Victory and the future of the world as will their brothers whose weapons are guns.



“Well, what do you say, dear—Joad, spam and no fire; or Judy Garland, chips and no taxi?”



"Ah! we live in strange times, William."

"Weel, we've nothing better to do."

Funny Ha Ha

A GIRL who saw me to-day with some surprise suddenly said "My word, you *have* done a funny thing," and then as she saw my expression made speed to quote (from Ian Hay, I think), "I don't mean funny ha ha, I mean funny peculiar." I am not at all sure she may not be right in both senses, and if I have done a funny thing I shall certainly now turn it to account.

My right arm is enclosed in an iron cage and kept in a horizontal position supported by other iron bars which bite into the white skin of my body in a way my body resents. It has to remain in this position for five weeks, but I will nevertheless tell you some of the things which strike me as funny about it.

The first is that ever since I joined the R.A.S.C. I have been answering the question "Can you ride a motor cycle?" in the affirmative. Obviously I should have said "No," and I always

shall in future. I don't remember how it happened, but I do remember passing through the air with my head tucked well down and my arms folded tightly round my knees, which were hunched up under my chin. In this attitude I was bouncing on a very hard road, and whilst doing so I reflected that I must look like one of Joe Boganny's Lunatic Bakers, although from the artistic point of view it might have been a Slavonic dance.

You have heard, no doubt, how parachutists try to steer themselves during their descent. I tried to steer myself whilst bouncing, with the idea of avoiding lamp-posts and iron railings, by effecting a sharp turn to the right at the culminating point of my trajectory and then bearing slightly to the left just before landing. Yet on coming to an enforced halt very out of breath I found somebody shaking my head and tugging my ears as if I

were a boxer. A voice was saying "How do you feel now?"

At this point another character comes into the story. He was one of those individuals who spend their lives standing at a point of vantage in some main thoroughfare, and who never go home until they have some adventure to report. To this individual I must have been a godsend; he was delighted to assist me to a nearby house and arrange for me to sit there at my ease. I think now that he had wanted to see inside this particular house for years, and that I provided him with his first reasonable excuse.

Our hostess was soon under his domination. I refused tea, cold water, and even sal volatile; he accepted all three, and I remember seeing him in the end even expressing an opinion on her whisky.

It was noted that I was pale and that beads of perspiration studded my brow, but the comfort of the room was

controlled by this character. It was he who felt warm and opened the window, and he who later felt cold and, lighting the fire, sat in front of it. He was shown the etchings; I was considered past it.

As time passed and the ambulance did not arrive to fetch me away, the contents of the larder were discussed. My friend sat down to boiled eggs. He accepted a tin of sardines which he took away in his pocket. He was given the freedom of the orchard and a cigar, and he ended up by taking a hot bath and borrowing a suit of clothes from the lady's husband for the week-end. Next day he made a statement as to the cause of the accident, which was practically a short story starting in his own childhood.

The next funny thing about my accident is contributed by my batman, who, after I had returned to quarters and had been put to bed, heard that I was to get up again and go to hospital for X-ray. His only observation was, "Now, what will you wear, sir? Best S.D.?" I could not have put my right arm into an opera cloak.

Under the anæsthetic I dreamed that I was looking at a dial like that of a weighing-machine, which recorded how much chloroform I was taking, and I understood that if the pointer made a complete circle and got back to 12 o'clock it would mean that I was dead. The pointer duly got there, and sure enough a little ticket shot up, like the "No Sale" sign on a cash register, bearing the one word "Dead." I was naturally rather sorry for myself, but that was not the end; the pointer continued its journey to a quarter past the hour, where another little ticket popped into view saying "By a long chalk."

When I revived and saw people at my bedside I understand I exclaimed "Good lord, am I dying? What are all these ruddy relatives round the bed for?" I have now more or less got used to the mediæval strait-jacket with which they have equipped me, and other people point out that the doctors were kind enough to fix my hand in such a position that it will hold a glass. They fail to see that I hold it in a fixed position two feet away from my mouth.

The stock joke in this mess, whenever I enter it, is provided by one man who invariably sits up and says "You want permission to land?" No doubt it does look as if I were gliding in with one broken wing. In any case the contraption is called an aeroplane splint.

I have had one other dream—that I was playing County cricket and that

we had made six hundred runs in the day, to which I had contributed over two hundred, which even in my dream I thought a very creditable performance for a man with a fractured shoulder. What puzzled me was that I appeared to have gone to bed wearing cricket-pads, wicket-keeping gloves and a kind of baseball outfit, in which I was so uncomfortable that I woke and rang for my batman, saying I had gone to bed in my cricket gear and would he please take it off. He explained that the doctors required me to wear it for five weeks.

Of course this may not be funny at all, but somebody did say with a croak "Well, I don't suppose we shall see anything in *Punch* about this," and I take that as a challenge.

Transport Problem

SAY, which is the travelling-deities' more

Delightfully humorous jest—

This: "IF THERE IS ROOM, THEN LIE DOWN ON THE FLOOR,"

Or: "BUSES STOP HERE BY REQUEST"?

o o

Another Concert of Europe

"The cordiality of the Moscow Conference and the forthcoming meeting of Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt are significant, above all, because the three Allies created permanent organs to hammer out a common policy for Europe."—*The New Statesman*.



"The laundry's come back, M'm—right on the very month they promised!"



"... And who is it that Stanley meets on his travels through darkest Africa? Tune in to next week's 'Flash-back' and find out."

Sad Piece

I MOURN what might have been.
I lament a work of art which now will never catch the critics' eye.
I should have been so proud to have been connected with it,
And I should have been connected with it all right
Because what I am mourning and lamenting
Is the brown beard,
Silky but wiresome,
Incomparably beautiful, that I never grew.

Now I shall never have the pleasure of presenting it—
Remaining the life-curator, of course—
To the National Trust.

Now it will never be officially unveiled,
Vibrating elegantly to the hum of news-reel cameras,
In the presence of my lords, ladies and gentlemen.

It would have been a beard warmly embraced by history.
A little bitter work with a pencil on the back of my tailor's bill

Tells me that I have rebuffed its patient and generous advances

With that philistine tool the razor
On over seven thousand occasions.

This means that a thousand agonizing hours
Which could have been spent healthfully in bed
I have dedicated to the daily ploughing up of my face
In response to a lot of idle but influential prejudice

Which has ringed me about, alas,
All these wasted and unfringed years.

It would have been the sort of beard
That sweeps a path
Through congregations.
Bustards and yellowhammers and kittihawks would have
made it their home from home.

Just clear of the soup,
It would have kissed lightly the things that perch on toast,
And been a diet-chart studied with respect by head waiters:
"Sir, but I see you had *Dindon Barbarossa* only yesterday?"

I should have gone in for topiary too
(A plan for which I once outlined in these pages
In an interesting article)
And taken on the chin
A three-masted schooner,
A bust of Pitt the wrong way up,
And anything else which had caught my fancy,
As I think a model of the maze at Hampton Court might.
Such a beard would have been invited all over the place,
And whether they had wanted to or not
They would have had to ask me too.
I could have lectured everywhere on my beard.
Or, when preferred, through it.

Vouched for in the two-day growths of flu,
Its colour would have been classic—
Sheer brown, a collector's dream.
That is why now the time has passed.
A week in hospital, a mirror, and I knew the worst.
Brown no more.
Pepper and salt.
Little flecks of snow, ah me!

I beg of you to refrain from pointing out
The great strides made in the aniline world.
No one has yet suggested clothing the Venus de Milo
In the by-products of coal-tar.
I feel the same way about my beard.
Perhaps when I am very old
And floating lightly about in a helicoptic bath-chair,
Reluctantly subscribed for by my grandchildren,
I may grow a late night final in silver.
Ce sera magnifique, no doubt, *mais*
Ce ne sera pas the wonderful brown beard
I might have grown.

ERIC.

THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS

"AS you may well imagine, this is about the worst time of the year to be at sea, and so at this time such articles as you send are a genuine comfort to me."

Now more than ever before are we dependent for our livelihood upon the courage and steadfastness of our gallant crews "that go down to the sea in ships." You, by your generous gifts to the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, can help to alleviate their sufferings, and to make their task less arduous. We rely on you because we know that, like them, you will not let us down. All donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

The Yule Log

THE last appeal of the Minister of Fuel and Power (and the approach of Christmas) put an edge on my felling-axe and I found myself looking for a suitable tree which would help me to do my duty and provide a Yule log at the same time.

Before tackling a job of this sort I like to watch someone else showing me how easy it is, so for this purpose I walked to a likely spot in the country.

Presently the shaking of the road and a partial eclipse of the sun announced the arrival of a machine wheeling several gigantic logs to the Timber Front, and I decided to trail it back home.

I followed the wheel tracks easily enough, down into pot-holes and up the other sides again, until I came to a lake which was once a lane leading to someone's house. Having swum through this I landed in a bog. This bog is known, by those working under the Timber Control, as an Extraction Centre. (Practically anything can be extracted here except the teeth on the wheels of a tractor.) It consists of a large piece of ground which is battered into a pudding every day by steam and petrol engines, encouraged in their dirty work by shouts and cries from those engaged to drive them to it. These engines sometimes go deep into the woods, presumably to clean their wheels, but generally they stay in the pudding and spend their time swallowing a wire rope at the end of which is a stick.*

I followed one of these ropes and presently I heard the merry ring of a woodman's voice shouting to his mate to ask for the time. In between times, with axes, they were knocking great flakes from the base of a gigantic beech. Without any trouble they then set to work with a cross-cut saw, but unlike mine it seemed to cut very well without either of them getting cross. Picking up some iron wedges, they knocked them into the gap, forgot to shout "Timber!" and, with a mighty crash, another ancient had gone the way of all good trees. Leaping on to the fallen giant, they lopped off his smaller limbs, cut his head off, and there he was ready to be tucked round with the wire rope.

Hurrying back to my little wood I picked out a spot where there was some overcrowding. Very soon chips

were flying out of the tree and axe alternately and the temperature rose sharply. I intended the tree should fall between two others, but as it began to totter I realized my mistake. To a shout of "Timber" a rabbit scurried out of the undergrowth and the tree, going off like a machine-gun with stoppages, began to crash. It hesitated in a moirered manner and then subsided into the outstretched limbs of another.

After an hour's work I was quite certain there was nothing for it but to hew down the supporting tree.

Two hours later, with a noise like a thunderflash it too began to fall, paused, took the wrong turning and both trees fell into an old oak.

I made another trip to the batter pudding and, after the law had been complied with in triplicate, the representative of the Timber Control felled all my troubles.

"Not a bad butt," he said pointing to the oak. "That'll go into the keel of a ship."

I got an odd branch or two to keep the home fires burning, but my prize Yule log will plough the seven seas in the care of the Royal Navy.

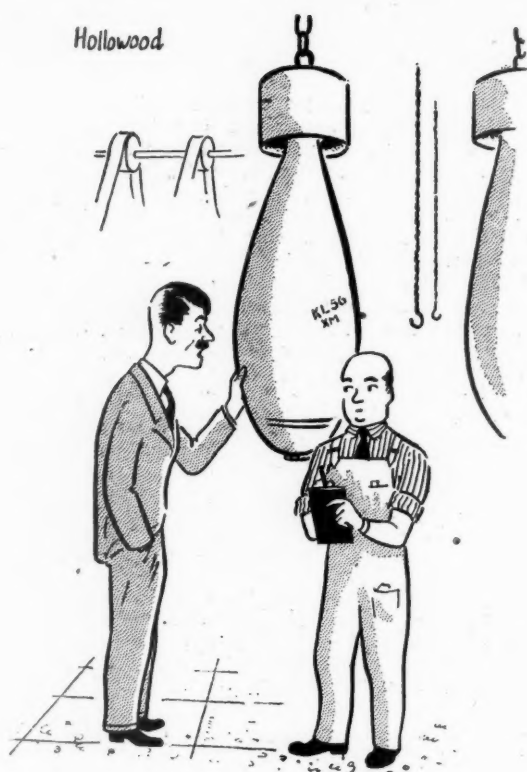
Good-bye to All That

"ONE Pair black Riding Boots & Trees 7 Hunting Crop Cabin Trunk Gent.'s Umbrella Pifco Paraffin Heater Wtd. Chimney Sweep's Kit."—Advt. in the "Birmingham Mail."



"I got them from an Indian rajah."

*About thirty feet (long) by four feet (diameter).



"I want you to time this one to go off just before the Armistice."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Judaism

EDMOND FLEG's *Why I Am a Jew* (GOLLANCZ, 2/6) is an extremely interesting exposition of Judaism, written in 1927 and now translated from the French by Mr. VICTOR GOLLANCZ. Born in Geneva about sixty years ago, EDMOND FLEG was brought up in strict conformity with the rites and usages of the Jewish religion. At night his nurse or mother made him repeat a few Hebrew words, and the contrast between these meaningless words and his own prayers in French began to estrange him from Judaism. In his teens, on a visit to a Christian friend, he was impressed by the absence of dietary laws and burdensome prohibitions, and by the divergences of taste and opinion in his friend's family. Before he was twenty he had entirely discarded his ancestral faith and become an agnostic whose only interests were aesthetic and literary. It was the intense anti-Jewish feeling aroused in France by the Dreyfus affair which made him aware that he was still a Jew—"I felt myself banished from the brotherhood of men. And I asked myself: 'Jew, what is your place in the world?'" The answer to this question occupies the rest of the book, and may be briefly summed up as a conviction, arrived at gradually and after much study of the Old Testament and the Talmud, that Christianity, Mohammedanism, and the various secular religions of the modern world are all, in greater or less degree, deviations from the pure

spirituality of Judaism—"Israel alone has preserved in its absolute purity the divine message, twofold, of divine Unity and human Unity; and, on the road that leads to its accomplishment, Israel has taken, by virtue of her history, a step in advance of the rest of mankind." This high claim may seem to non-Jewish readers rather the natural protest of a race exposed for thousands of years to violence and injustice than a disinterested conviction of a special grace accorded to one people and denied to all others. The history of mankind lends no support to the belief that any particular race or nation is qualified to serve as a model to the rest. The author recognizes this himself when he writes: "Alas, Israel is not yet a people of saints." Nor, one may add, are the Germans and the Japanese, both of whom are suffering at present from the illusion of a special mission. The unsoundness of its main argument does not, however, affect the value of the book as an eloquent expression of the sublime and universal elements in Judaism.

H. K.

An Innkeeper's Repertory

Reminders that cookery is an art and not a science are always welcome; and if *John Fothergill's Cookery Book* (CHATTO AND WINDUS, 6/-) is an impressionist rather than a classical production—well, so much the better for those who like a vivid highly-flavoured cuisine laid on (so to speak) with a square hog's-hair brush. Purists will look askance at its *ersatz* omelet made with dried egg and at its risotto that adds gravy—however rich in succulent tit-bits—to already cooked rice. Yet one can by-pass these heresies and still enjoy some dozens of the author's own happier innovations and the recipes he has adopted from out-of-the-way books and from friends. Here, for instance, is the Soda-Cake that was such a stand-by at Thame, a Market Harboro' woman's Mint Jelly and an American variant of Plum-Pudding—all the best of their kind. Mr. FOTHERGILL takes you hospitably round his kitchen. (His description of his work-table, as an organ with all its music-making stops to hand, is a masterpiece of infectious enthusiasm.) And lest one should be tempted to forget the cook's noted irascibility, the book boasts two terrifying portraits and an excellent chicken dish called after the guest who spurned it.

H. P. E.

Causerie de Samedi

Here is *The Saturday Book* 3 (HUTCHINSON, 12/6. Editor LEONARD RUSSELL) in time for Christmas 1943. We constant readers have come to expect from these collections the atmosphere of a brilliant but somewhat exclusive party. What luck for us to be invited! But while conscious of this, we can't help feeling a little defensive and unwanted. This *Saturday Book*, like its two predecessors, starts off in just this way. There is a foreword to tell us that the book will be "a factual mood expressed in factual writing." Then comes the series, familiar by now from *Lilliput* and *Picture Post*, of dug-up photographs from the last eighty-odd years, with a commentary to show that the editors at least have never been deceived by the trend of events. And then there is some warmed-over reporting, from Russia by ALEXANDER WERTH, and from the Tube shelters by Mass Observation. And then it's the turn of the Services: as usual, for some reason, the R.A.F. is represented by a dashing account of operations, while the Army is written off with a comic sketch about red tape and forms in triplicate. And then SEAN O'CASEY on the English drama: "The theatre is gun-peal and slogan-cry, woe and wantonness and laughter, in the midst of the grace of

God . . ." You feel the atmosphere of the party closing round you again—"Let's ask O'Casey—he can always think of something to say." But after that *The Saturday Book 3* picks up. JULIAN HUXLEY writes brilliantly on animal courtship. A. A. MILNE and FRANCIS LES contribute detective stories of the good old-fashioned type—both of them are told in clubs by narrators who settle down in their chairs, order another drink and half close their eyes while they get the yarn straight. And last of all, BERNARD DARWIN weighs in with a delightful portrait of Squire Osbaldeston, the mid-Victorian sportsman and out-and-outer, hero of a hundred wagers. The last part of the book, in fact, happily forgets the first, and altogether it is well worth having.

P. M. F.

Pekin Preserved

What Laurence Housman has done as a dramatist for Queen Victoria, Mr. MAURICE COLLIS, with a befitting access of ruthlessness, does for the Chinese empress-dowager of Boxer fame. In three acts, and any number of scenes, the nefarious career of Tzu Hsi majestically unrolls itself, each act prefaced by a Confucian prologue condoning in true court fashion the hotch-potch of villainy to follow. The first curtain rises on the exquisite virago, Orchid, with a rather blowzy sister and an indigent mother, setting out to blandish her way to Pekin. The last falls on the decorous death-bed of *The Motherly and Auspicious* (FABER, 12/6). In between lie the tactful poisoning or strangling of three emperors and innumerable rivals, the equally tactful beguiling of fools and knaves, bureaucrats and intelligentsia. "Off" are heard the European Barbarians whom the matriarch so soundly assesses. ("Give a rat shelter and he will eat you out of the house.") "Off" too are heard the Boxers, the only "patriots" available to confront the Barbarians. Thus the ironic humours of a court chronicle-play reflect the great world beyond with the comprehensiveness, brilliance and distortion of a small convex mirror in a large room. It is enormously entertaining to read, and should take to the boards like a duck to water.

H. P. E.

Bishop Hensley Henson

This second volume of Bishop HENSLEY HENSON's autobiography (*Retrospect of An Unimportant Life*. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 21/-) covers the years from 1920 to 1939, and is concerned with many of the important events of that time, from the controversy over Prayer Book Reform to the conquest of Abyssinia by Mussolini and the religious persecutions in Germany. Like most memoirs of public men, it suffers from a lack of selection and condensation. An autobiography should be a narrative, sparingly illustrated by extracts from journals and letters, not a mass of extracts linked together by explanatory paragraphs. The reader wants a picture of the autobiographer's past, not a pilgrimage through all those momentary incidents, impressions and reflections, so few of which retain much significance after any lapse of time. Where Bishop HENSLEY HENSON's autobiography differs from the vast majority of similar compilations is in its sincerity and uncompromising candour. A real English character emerges from it, resolutely opposed to Socialism on the one hand and "the Papal version of Christ's religion" on the other, and in his own words "still, in temper and fundamental belief, an Individualist." His estimate of other clerics is altogether unworped by forced cordiality. In one entry he lays out three of his brother bishops, stigmatising the foolish language of one, the ceremonial

absurdities of another, and the bitter feelings aroused by the third. A book by a well-known popular preacher he dismisses as extremely foolish, and with "the usual fulsome laudation of the present Archbishop." Even when he is less sweeping he is still critical enough, as in his characterization of a foreign archbishop—"He is an extremely clever and versatile man, and watches very closely the signs of their preferences which his hearers betray. Then he matches his words, with quite amazing adroitness, to their preferences." This plain dealing with others is made palatable by his unpretentiousness about himself. On his appointment to the bishopric of Durham, he noted in his journal that he did not feel himself equipped with the deeper requirements of great spiritual office, and could hope at most to be a just and vigilant governor. When he makes a poor speech he records his failure as readily as his pleasure when a friend called one of his speeches "stately"; and in his farewell to Durham he confesses his regret for the great position he was vacating, and distaste for "the poverty-stricken obscurity of a pensioned ecclesiastic."

H. K.

Lest We Forget

In *Norway is My Country* (COLLINS, 7/6) Mrs. SYNNOVE CHRISTENSEN has given us an account of a country during enemy occupation. It is better and worse than any novel—better because the pride, valour and self-sacrifice are true and not the attributes of paper people; worse because the reader cannot help being excited, and there is something horrible about being thrilled vicariously by the real dangers of living people. The author, so her publishers tell us, is in her thirties, and until 1940 lived contentedly in Oslo. Her son was five years old when the book begins. The first chapter describes the arrest of her father, the second her own cross-examination, insulting but not too terrible. The terrors began when her husband was released from prison and joined one of the "groups"—there were many of these, and each member tried to carry poison in case of being tortured into talk. The chapters on taking cover and the escape into Sweden, after carrying their doped child over miles of unsafe ice, are really memorable. Mrs. CHRISTENSEN has given us a present of cold facts and cold hatred which are worth storing up for use on some future occasion.

B. E. B.

Bombs Over England

The wonder about "blitz" novels is not their likeness but their unlikeness, an unlikeness arising of course from the infinite variety of human character and its reactions to the same set of circumstances. Miss SUSAN ERTZ's *Anger in the Sky* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 8/6) is a case in point. To a great extent the book is more a sort of running commentary on the war as seen through several pairs of eyes than a story, and inevitably a few of the characters tend to be rather types than individuals, notably the "Left Wing" schoolmaster and the American Isolationist, a diffuse person whose rounded periods fully deserve the strictures of his hosts, even after his change of heart. One is, on the other hand, really grateful to Miss ERTZ for others of her portraits—especially that of the eager and vital seventeen-year-old *Stacy*. Her death, through one of those unnecessary brutalities all too frequent in total war, removes at an early stage in the story quite the most real and attractive personality from what is, on the whole, one of the most truthful, sympathetic and balanced studies of England under bombing that war fiction has so far produced.

C. F. S.



"... if, on the other hand, you believe that the Edwardian era was the heyday of carefree London life, I should 'ave Number 2."

Careless Thoughts

PAINFULLY balanced on the narrow window ledge I hit an unsteady tack with a wavering hammer.

It was the usual black-out trouble. There had been a reprimand. But, I may add, actually rather a grand reprimand as reprimands go. Say what you will, we snobs have our little comforts, and when committed for murder one may find a certain chic in entering the dock before a High Court judge.

And my reprimand this time had been on a grand scale. None of your kindly hints from the milkman, nor a suggestion from one's ex-cook, now a warden. No, no, I had been solemnly warned by the River Police. And my anxiety and shame were alike augmented and reduced by the thought that I was the cringing and penitent object of so noble a wrath. They had glanced a moment as they sped by on

their urgent occasions and pointed a finger. I was the last chink in the armour of defence against Hitler's might.

But as I banged away with renewed self-importance the tin-tack crumbled beneath my blows and the strip of black cloth curled quietly down out of reach.

I got down to review the situation. The black-out undoubtedly topped the list of war-time irritations. But at Victory! In a crack we would whip it down.

Victory? Perhaps not so far off? And then, Hey presto! Off with the restrictions.

Coupons, now—except of course the Board of Trade had announced... Or queues for buses... I'd seen somewhere that for years to come the need for conserving petrol...

Or bananas... Hadn't they said something on the wireless lately about

shipping space after the war being needed for...

Well, eggs... but then hens had to have chickens, and *they'd* have to have chickens, and...

I'd get my watch-mended—unless my jeweller was in the Army of Occupation.

What about paper? We should be given a bit more... If only I could remember what paper was made of...

And we could go abroad... Oh, no! there'd be sure to be some snag there... Never mind. There was always the black-out. I'd tear it down even as the maroons rang out.

And to show that no careless thoughts of early victory should come stealing unctuously into my head I sprang up and seized a handful of stout carpet nails and, hammer in hand, sprang on to a chair. I hit the nails full on the head and drove them irretrievably into the frame of the window.

H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

II

THE fragment below dates from the time the twins were practising lassoing. They had just caught me and roped me up when my wife called to say that a friend had brought the family a large chicory omelet she had over from her daughter's wedding. They rushed away to get their share of the gift and left me; but though stationary in the extreme is what I was, I managed to have the following all made up ready in my head by the time they came out and released me, which, as I expected, was before nightfall, they having hired the lasso.

WATER IS THICKER THAN AIR.

(The scene is a cabin in a ship. The CAPTAIN is eating devilled kidneys and learning his part for the evening performance: the officers are putting on a drama week for the edification of the crew, and this year are restricting the festival to Beaumont and Fletcher. Enter Leading Stowaway, THE LORD CHISWICK.)

CAPTAIN. In what direction is the ship proceeding?

CHISWICK. Southish.

CAPTAIN. Let it continue so to do.

CHISWICK. The men wish to make port as they consider that the cook needs a refresher course.

CAPTAIN. It seems only the other day that we were in port. This habit must not be allowed to grow upon the crew.

CHISWICK. If you want any applause to-night...

CAPTAIN. Oh, by all means then make for harbour. I believe they have a good one at Sydney.

[Exit CHISWICK]

Enter SUPERCARGO SMITH

SMITH. Can't we get rid of all these cheap tin trays we are carrying? They restrict the seating in the hold, and I am sure it is subversive to discipline, crowding all the crew into the stalls.

CAPTAIN. How can I ever get my work done if you keep on interrupting me? You are in charge of the cargo.

SMITH. Yes, I know, but I thought you were part-owner.

CAPTAIN. I sold my share by wireless the other day. I think the man who bought it was some kind of consul somewhere, either that or a King's Counsel. The operator is getting dreadfully vague since he took up water divining.

SMITH. All right then, I'll dump them on the next island we pass: if I put them in the sea they'd rust.

[Exit SMITH. CAPTAIN desperately mumbles his part]

Enter MRS. PERKINS, the saloon passenger, and
MR. PERKINS, the steerage passenger

MRS. PERKINS. Can I sell you a ticket for the raffle?

MR. PERKINS. Would you like me to insure your life, your car or your livestock?

CAPTAIN. Leave me alone. Go away. (Very loudly) Boat drill!

MRS. PERKINS (plaintively). That's the fourth we've had to-day, you know.

MR. PERKINS. And the boat is so very collapsible.

CAPTAIN (grudgingly). Well, you can make it a fire drill, but don't use the extinguisher in the galley this time. I can still taste it.

[Exit MR. and MRS. PERKINS]

CAPTAIN. I've still got half my part to learn. I wish I had never run away to sea. I wish I had gone on helping father with the bank. There was only another three feet to go.

Enter FIRST MATE, partly in Elizabethan costume

FIRST MATE. I can't seem to anchor my ruff. When the wind catches it, it simply whizzes round and round and gives me hiccoughs.

CAPTAIN. Wire it up to your beard.

FIRST MATE. I tried that and it hurt like hell.

CAPTAIN. The trouble is we haven't really got a producer. If we had he could deal with all that kind of thing. I am sure we began with one.

FIRST MATE. Now you come to mention it, so we did. I wonder where he is. No one's fallen off lately.

CAPTAIN. The Chief Engineer might have borrowed him. It was three weeks before we found he'd got all the stewards.

FIRST MATE. Well, we dare not inquire. It would offend him. The revolving stage gives him such opportunities.

CAPTAIN. By the way, need we have anyone at the wheel during the performance?

FIRST MATE. Able Seaman Robinson minor has volunteered.

CAPTAIN. Certainly not! He's just the kind of man we want to reach. He got out of Scheherazade by skulking in the crow's-nest. Perhaps you might fix the wheel so that we are not aiming at land and leave it. Now do let me alone to learn my part or I shall be reduced to gagging, which is always so undignified in a Commanding Officer.

FIRST MATE. Well, if you will have the same man for the prompting and the timpani you can't expect much help. Don't want everybody to change the plot round to get you out of difficulties.

[Exit FIRST MATE. CAPTAIN gloomily plunges again into his task. Through a porthole comes the sound of sailors betting on how long he will last.]

FINIS



"The hole's gone!"

Green Four One

Of course we all blamed Percival. George, in particular, was furious.

It would have been different had Percival belonged to the Navy or Army. Then we could have smiled politely and said, "It doesn't matter in the slightest," and thought to ourselves, "What can you expect?" But Percival is a flying-officer and George is a flying-officer too, although Percival wears wings and flies a Hudson for Coastal Command, while George does not wear wings and pilots a high-speed launch for the Air-Sea Rescue Service. Actually they had never met. To George, Percival was just a name he heard over the telephone. But then the telephone is very important to us.

In a way we felt it was also something of a judgment on George. Not that anyone actively disliked him, but he had talked a lot. George's passion before the war had been for the sea. That had worked itself out in sailing a small boat on the landward side of the Isle of Wight in filthy flannels and carrying a small spirit stove, and a white cap for Cowes. This enthusiasm had carried him into the Rescue Service.

Whether George would have joined if he had known that his fate would be to bounce up and down whenever the sea ceases to resemble a billiard-cloth—which is usually—in a motor launch that seems mostly engines to the extreme discomfort of all inside, I don't know. Not that it matters. George became a deck-hand and worked his way up.

But he would talk about Malta, his last station as first-class coxswain before he got his commission. We didn't mind George being a hero, but what we did object to was his almost cinema-like stories of spending day after day in a continual whirl of pulling fighter pilots and air-crews by the score out of the blue and sparkling waters of the Mediterranean. We had no doubt Malta had been spectacular and dangerous and generally the kind of place to bring glamour into the lives of Air-Sea Rescue personnel. But we hadn't been to Malta, and it was all so different from the dirty North Sea and the drab northern port we inhabit.

We lead a life of waiting. There are a dozen or so different organizations

that will report any aircraft that crash at sea or any crews that take to their rafts or dinghies, and Coastal Command, including Percival's Hudson, is one. He started this one by wireless back from patrol that he had spotted a raft some thirty miles out from the coast, in the middle of the usual green smudge on the water, made by the dye carried in all aircraft for just that purpose. George's launch was first duty boat, and away he went.

It was just before lunch. It looked like being a good lunch, so we told George we might fix him up some bread and cocoa when he came back. It is possible we were a little envious of George. A rescue is a considerable tonic to any boat's crew, and we felt that after George's record at Malta Fate might have left the first rescue since he arrived at the station to someone else.

It was a dull drizzling day, with a short swell from the south, and it must have been an unpleasant run.



"Have you any scraps of olive-green felt suitable for lagging a cistern in this colour?"

Especially when George found that Percival's estimate of the position of the raft was not too accurate.

So George went on looking, and later in the afternoon his heart leapt. There, on a bearing Green 41, was the tell-tale green stain which meant that they were getting pretty close to their quarry. They altered course towards it.

The first thing that looked wrong was that the water began to get opaque. The green stain carried in aircraft dinghies is only a stain. It should have no effect on the sea other than to change its North Sea muddiness to the artificial green of a suburban swimming-pool. But this was filling the water with innumerable specks of dirty green froth. And the deeper they went into the patch the thicker the water became until the froth had become something of a scum on the surface. And more dirty yellow than green.

Obviously something was wrong. George said he thought it might be a new secret weapon and wondered uneasily where his anti-gas respirator was. At the same time he was rather elated. It is still something to be the first man to investigate a secret weapon. It is something too to have a definite object to pick up at the end of some hours of searching.

Then they sighted the raft, or what Percival had claimed to be the raft. We could imagine George, standing up in the conning hatch, guiding his craft in with crisp workmanlike commands. They told us afterwards that he came alongside the black object with all the precision of an admiral's barge paying a ceremonial visit to another flag officer. Only it wasn't a raft or a dinghy. It was a barrel.

The barrel was labelled "Kane and Doubleday Dried Products Co., Chicago, Ill. Betsy Brand Dried Eggs," and the remainder of the same cargo from the torpedoed ship was now constituting the yellow scum floating around the launch.

They picked up the barrel as it was intact, and George had omelets and scrambled eggs every day until he got very tired of them. We told him that was one thing he hadn't had too much of in Malta.

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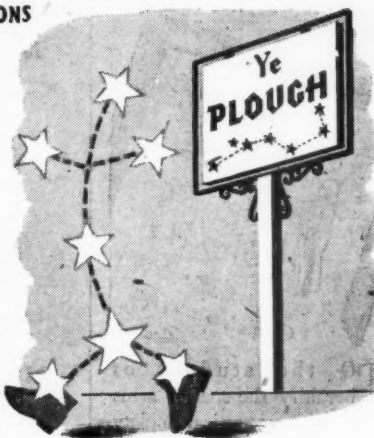
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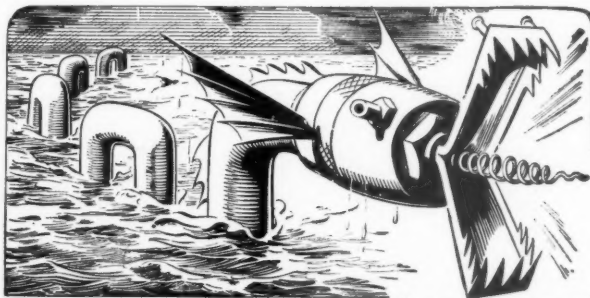


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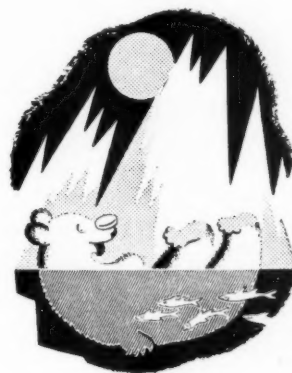


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